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IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for configuring a programmable logic controller (PLC) having a protocol, said method implemented by a computer and comprising the step of providing, by the computer, an extensible markup language (XML) schema for the protocol of the PLC, wherein said providing an extensible markup language schema comprises formatting an Ethernet Global Data language of the PLC by applying an extensible markup language format, wherein said formatting the Ethernet Global Data language of the PLC comprises providing, within the XML schema, a reference to an address of a location of a variable within the PLC.

2. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 1 further comprising the step of configuring the PLC utilizing an XML file with grammar at least partially according to the schema.

3. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 1 further comprising the step of utilizing the schema to validate at least one XML file.

4. (original) A method according to Claim 3 wherein said step of utilizing the schema further comprises the step of utilizing the schema to validate at least one XML file created by a configuration tool.

5. (original) A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of providing an extensible markup language schema further comprises the step of providing an extensible markup language schema for a propriety protocol of the PLC.

6. (original) A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of providing an extensible markup language schema further comprises the step of providing an extensible markup language schema including definitions for the protocol of the PLC.

7. (original) A method according to Claim 4 wherein said step of utilizing the schema further comprises the step of utilizing the schema to validate at least one XML file created by a configuration tool for a protocol different than the protocol of the PLC.